



# **U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary**

## **F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman**

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### ***News Advisory***

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## **GAO Report Finds Worksite Enforcement and Employer Sanctions Are Essential to Manage Guest Worker Programs**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Government Accountability Office (GAO) today released a report <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d061055.pdf> "Foreign Workers: Information on Selected Countries' Experiences," which finds that worksite enforcement and employer sanctions are essential to successfully managing guest worker programs. The report provides a detailed analysis of guest workers programs in eight countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. It also provides worksite enforcement information on six additional countries: Argentina, Austria, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, and Singapore.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.), who requested the report, said, "Last year I asked the GAO to look at these countries' guest worker programs because I wanted a basis to evaluate what the Senate was considering. What the GAO has found confirms my belief that it makes no sense to expand guest worker programs without a strong program for internal enforcement and rigorous worksite enforcement. Roughly half of the countries surveyed impose tougher civil and criminal fines for employers of illegal immigrants than does the United States. For example, in 2005, German officials conducted nearly 54,000 investigations resulting in administrative fines of \$84 million, and confiscated \$16 million in assets, in addition to criminal sentences that totaled 1,000 years and more than \$26 million in fines. Other countries surveyed are also tough on employers who hire illegal workers; we should look at what is effective in other countries to help us build a better system for the enforcement of employer verification programs here."

"Additionally, most of the countries GAO surveyed have strategies for systematically combatting the employment of illegal immigrants, including the use of tax information and social insurance information. Before the Congress considers expanding any guest worker programs, we need to enact a much more comprehensive set of laws that impose tough sanctions on the employers of illegal immigrants, and, most importantly, enforce those laws," added Chairman Sensenbrenner.

### **GAO Report Highlights:**

- **Countries' enforcement efforts are employer-focused but also include deportation of unauthorized immigrants.** All but two of the countries GAO surveyed provide for deportation of unauthorized workers.
- **Governments receive tips and check multiple databases to identity employment of unauthorized workers.** For example, French government officials compare information reported by employers to the French social security administration.
- **Frequency and publicity of employer inspections deter unauthorized foreign worker employment.** The GAO report states, "Government officials and experts have noted that conducting frequent employer investigations and publicizing those investigations helps deter employers' hiring of unauthorized foreign workers."

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